

critical public. Amongst those friends to whom Mr. Park frequently communicated in a colloquial way many most interesting and remarkable circumstances which did not appear in his printed travels, was Sir Walter Scott, between whom and Mr. Park a strong intimacy was contracted subsequent to the return of the latter from Africa, and who tells us, that having once noticed to his friend the omissions in question (which appeared to one of his romantic temperament and ardent imagination to be unaccountable), and asked an explanation, Mr. Park replied, "that in all cases where he had information to communicate which he thought of importance to the public, he had stated the facts boldly, leaving it to his readers to give such credit to his statements as they might appear justly to deserve; but that he would not shock their credulity, or render his travels more marvellous, by introducing circumstances, which, however true, were of little or no moment, as they related solely to his own personal adventures and escapes." If this scrupulousness on the part of the traveller is to be regretted in one sense, as consigning to oblivion many curious and interesting facts, it certainly raises him as a man and an author incalculably in our estimation, and bespeaks the most implicit belief and confidence in what he *has* promulgated to the world.

After the publication of his travels he returned to Scotland, and in August the same year married Miss Anderson, the eldest daughter of his old master at Selkirk. For some time after his marriage, and before he set out on his second expedition, Mr. Park appears to have been quite undecided as to his prospects in life; and perhaps the comparative independence of his circumstances, from the profits of his publication and the remuneration he obtained from the African Association, rendered him somewhat indifferent to any immediate permanent situation. But it was likewise strongly suspected by his intimate friends, that he entertained hopes of being soon called upon to undertake another mission to the Niger, although he kept perfectly silent on the subject.

As time continued to elapse without any such proposition from the expected quarter being made, Mr. Park perceived the imprudence of remaining in idleness, and in 1801 removed to Peebles, where he commenced practice as a surgeon. But it would appear he was not very successful in this speculation; and this fact, together with the natural restlessness of his disposition, seems to have rendered his situation peculiarly irksome to him. In answer to a friend who suspected his design of again proceeding abroad, and earnestly remonstrated with him against it, he writes, "that a few inglorious winters of practice at Peebles was a risk as great, and would tend as effectually to shorten life, as the journey he was about to undertake." In the meantime his *ennui* or impatience was much relieved by the enjoyment of the best society in the neighbourhood, and by being honoured with the friendship of many of the most distinguished characters in Scotland at that time. Amongst these were the venerable Dr. Adam Ferguson, then resident at Hallyards, near Peebles; Colonel Murray of Cringletie; and Professor Dugald Stewart. As before mentioned, too, a strong intimacy sprung up between our traveller and Sir Walter Scott, then but little known in the literary world, and who resided with his family at Ashiestiel, on the banks of the Tweed. This friendship commenced in 1804, after Mr. Park had removed from Peebles to Fowlshiels and was preparing for his second expedition to Africa, of which he had then got intimation. It is pleasing to know the cordiality and affectionate familiarity which subsisted between

these celebrated men, and also that it arose from a marked congeniality in their tastes and habits.¹ Park was an enthusiastic lover of poetry, especially the minstrelsy with which his native district was rife; and although he made no pretensions to the laurel crown himself, he occasionally gave expression to his feelings and thoughts in verse, even from his earliest years. It was little wonder, then, that he should own a particular predilection for the society of one whose heart and memory were so richly stored with the ancient ballad lore of his country, although his reserve towards strangers in general, which was carried even to a repulsive degree, was notorious. In particular Sir Walter Scott has noticed the strong aversion of his friend to being questioned in a promiscuous company on the subject of his adventures, of which grievance, as may be imagined, he had frequent cause to complain.

The new mission to Africa, which was now sanctioned and promoted by government, had been projected so far back as 1801; but owing to changes in the ministry, and other causes of delay, the preparations for it were not completed till 1805. Mr. Park parted from his family, and proceeded to London with his brother-in-law, Mr. James Anderson, who, as well as Mr. Scott, an artist, had resolved to accompany him in his expedition. On this occasion Mr. Park received the brevet commission of captain in Africa, and a similar commission of lieutenant to his relative Mr. Anderson. Mr. Scott also was employed by government to accompany the expedition as draughtsman. Mr. Park was, at the same time, empowered to enlist soldiers from the garrison of the island of Goree, to the number of forty-five, to accompany him in his journey; and the sum of £5000 was placed at his disposal, together with directions as to his route, &c. The expedition sailed from Portsmouth on the 30th January, 1806, and arrived at Pisanía on the 28th of April, where preparations were immediately made for the inland journey. The party consisted of forty men, two lieutenants, a draughtsman (Mr. Scott), and Park himself; they had horses for themselves, and asses for carrying the provisions and merchandise. Mr. Park wrote to several friends at home, previously to setting out, in the highest spirits, and seemingly perfectly confident of success. In his letter to Mr. Dickson, he says, "This day six weeks I expect to drink all your healths in the Niger;" and again, "I have little doubt but that I shall be able, with presents and fair words, to pass through the country to the Niger; and if once we are fairly afloat, *the day is won.*" Alas! how sadly these sanguine expressions contrast with the melancholy issue of the expedition. Park's chance of reaching the Niger in safety depended mainly upon his doing so previously to the commencement of the rainy season, which is always most fatal to Europeans; but scarcely had they got half-way when the rain set in, and the effect on the health of the men was as speedy as disastrous. They were seized with vomiting, sickness, dysentery, and delirium; some died on the road, others were drowned in the rivers, and several were left in the precarious charge of the natives in the villages. Some, still more unfortunate, were lost in the woods, where they would inevitably be devoured by wild beasts; while the native banditti, who imagined the caravan to contain immense wealth, hung upon their march and plundered them at every opportunity. In crossing the Wondu, they nearly lost their guide Isaaco by a large crocodile, which pulled him below

¹ It chanced that they were born within a month of each other.